

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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INFO USIA WASHDC

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AMEMBASSY BERLIN

AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY PRAGUE

AMEMBASSY SOFIA

AMEMBASSY WARSAW

C O N F I D E N T I A L BUDAPEST 0626

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: HU, PINT

SUBJECT: UPCOMING WITH HSWP PARTY CONGRESS

REF: BUDAPEST 0426

1. SUMMARY: DISCUSSION HELD MARCH 5 WITH FOREIGN EDITOR OF SEMI-OFFICIAL GOH DAILY MAGYAR HIRLAP ABOUT PERSONNEL CHANGES AND POLICY DECISIONS WHICH CAN BE EXPECTED FROM XITH HSWP CONGRESS BEGINNING MARCH 17 UPDATES INFORMATION AVAILABLE AT THIS TIME AND SUBSTANTIALLY CONFIRMS PREDICTIONS MADE EARLIER REFTEL. PERSONNEL CHANGES FORESEEN AS CERTAIN ARE DEPARTURE OF FEHER, KALLAI, NYERS AND NEMES FROM POLITBUREAU AND OF FOCK AS PM. STILL IN DOUBT ARE POLITBUREAU POSITIONS OF FOCK, ACZEL AND BENKE. HUSZAR CONTINUES AS LEADING CONDIDATE TO SUCCEED FOCK AS PM, WITH VICE-PERMIER GYORGY LAZAR A SOMEWHAT CONFIDENTIAL

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DISTANT SECOND. UNSPECIFIED ADDITIONAL CABINET

CHANGES ALSO ANTICIPATED. NAMES OF NEW POLITBUREAU MEMBERS STILL HELD IN STRICT CONFIDENCE AND COULD NOT BE DETERMINED. LIKELIHOOD OF CONGRESS PRESERVING THE NEM BUT CONTINUING WITH CENTRALIZING ADJUSTMENTS IN ECONOMIC POLICY AND PLACING GREATER STRESS DOMESTIC CULTURAL/IDEOLOGICAL POLICY ALSO CONFIRMED. END SUMMARY.

2. USUALLY WELL-INFORMED FOREIGN EDITOR MAGYAR HIRLAP TOLD PAO DURING LUNCHEON CONVERSATION THAT EXTENSIVE PERSONNEL CHANGES AT MANY LEVELS OF PARTY AND GOVERNMENT CERTAIN TO OCCUR AT XITH HSWP CONGRESS THIS MONTH. SOURCE PREDICTED THAT AT LEAST SIX POLITBUREAU MEMBERS WILL BE CHANGED, WITH MOST INTERESTING QUESTION YET TO BE RESOLVED REVOLVING AROUND STATUS OF GYORGY ACZEL.

3. MANY OF THE CONFUSING SIGNALS ABOUT ACZEL'S STATUS AND LIKELY TIGHTENING OF DOMESTIC CULTURAL POLICIES WHICH HAVE EMANATED OVER PAST FEW MONTHS REFLECT REALITY OF ONE OF THE MORE IMPORTANT HIGH-LEVEL POWER STRUGGLES APPARENTLY STILL GOING ON. MANY CC AND PB MEMBERS EVIDENTLY UNHAPPY WITH ACZEL'S OVERLY "LIBERAL APPROACH" TO CULTURAL POLICY OVER PAST SEVERAL YEARS SUCCEEDED IN DEMOTING HIM LAST MARCH TO POST OF VICE-PREMIER, BUT FAILED TO CONTAIN HIS INFLUENCE OR STEM HIS CONTINUING EFFORTS TO ORGANIZE A GROUP AROUND HIM AND FIGHT WITH CONSIDERABLE EFFECTIVENESS AGAINST LOSS OF HIS POLITBUREAU SEAT OR REAL CONTROL OVER CULTURAL POLICIES. WHILE POLICY DECISION TO INCREASE IDEOLOGICAL CONTENT OF DOMESTIC MEDIA OUTPUT AND CONTINUE TREND TO RELY MORE ON CULTURAL FIELD AS INSTRUMENT OF SOCIALIST EDUCATION APPARENTLY ALREADY TAKEN, THE REMOVAL OF ACZEL AS AN OBSTACLE TO ITS IMPLEMENTATION SEEMS STILL IN DOUBT.

4. REMAINING QUESTION MARKS ON OTHER CHANGES SEEM LESS RELATED TO MAJOR POLICY STRUGGLES AND MORE TO CONSIDERATIONS OF PERSONAL POLITICS. STATUS OF BENKE FOR EXAMPLE DEPENDS ON HOW BADLY HER PLACE MAY BE CONFIDENTIAL

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NEEDED FOR AN UPCOMING YOUNGER PERSON. FOCK'S POLITBUREAU SEAT DEFENDED BY SOME ON GROUNDS THAT LOSING PREMIERSHIP SHOULD BE COMPENSATED BY ALLOWING HIM TO RETAIN HIS PB POST A WHILE LONGER.

5. WHILE NAMES OF PEOPLE SLATED FOR DEPARTURE GRADUALLY SLIPPING OUT, NAMES OF REPLACEMENTS CONTINUE TO BE VERY TIGHTLY HELD. FONMIN PUJA'S RISE TO

POLITBUREAU IS RUMORED, BUT IS PREDICATED ON ASSUMPTION THAT PULLAI IS IN TROUBLE AS FOREIGN POLICY MAKER EITHER IN MOSCOW OR IN BUDAPEST. LATTER SUPPOSITION IS STRONGLY DENIED BY MOST AUTHORITATIVE SOURCES. AN INTERESTING NAME SURFACING RECENTLY AS A POSSIBLE RETURNEE TO THE PB HAS BEEN THAT OF GYORGY MAROSAN, BUT MOST TALK IN THIS REGARD AS WELL AS ABOUT CABINET CHANGES APPEARS TO BE PURELY SPECULATIVE.

6. REGARDING PM POSITION SOURCE STATED LITTLE DOUBT THAT HUSZAR FAR BETTER QUALIFIED FOR POST THAN LAZAR. HE SAID FINAL CHOICE WOULD BE REVEALING BECAUSE LAZAR IS MUCH MORE THE CANDIDATE OF THOSE UNNAMED PARTY LEADERS WHO WOULD CONTROL PM POSITION FROM BEHIND SCENES. HUSZAR WOULD BE MORE HIS OWN MAN, AND A FORCE WITH WHICH TO RECKON IN PARTY COUNCILS.

7. IN ADDITION TO UPDATING AVAILABLE INFORMATION ON PERSONNEL CHANGES, SOURCE STRESSED THAT PRINCIPAL FEATURES AND RESULTS OF CONGRESS ARE VIRTUALLY CERTAIN TO BE: A. CONTINUATION OF KADAR AS FIRST SECRETARY, B. NO MAJOR OR SUDDEN POLICY CHANGES, C. MEASURES TO TIGHTEN CONTROL OF THE ECONOMY, D. A SHOT IN THE ARM FOR THE IDEOLOGISTS THROUGH MEASURES FAVORING THE INDUSTRIAL WORKERS AND RAISING THE LEVEL OF IDEOLOGICAL/CULTURAL ACTIVITIES, AND E. EXTENSIVE PERSONNEL CHANGES ON ALL LEVELS, REFLECTING THE AGIN NATURE OF THE LEADERSHIP JUST AS MUCH AS THE ECONOMIC AND IDEOLOGICAL ADJUSTMENTS WHICH ARE PLANNED.

8. COMMENT: EVEN IF ACZEL WERE TO LOSE HIS POSITION AFTER THE CONGRESS, MAJOR CHANGES IN CULTURAL POLICY, CONFIDENTIAL

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PARTICULARLY IN INTERNATIONAL ASPECTS APPEAR UNLIKELY. WHILE TALK OF IDEOLOGICAL OR CULTURAL TIGHTENING SEEMS TO BE CONSTANT FEATURE OF HUNGARIAN SCENE, FACT IS THAT IN PRACTICE FEW SIGNIFICANT ACTUAL CHANGES HAVE OCCURRED HERE DURING PAST YEAR. THIS MAY PARTLY BE EXPLAINED BY ACZEL'S PERSISTING PRESENCE AND PARTLY BY RECOGNIZED HUNGARIAN TENDENCY TO MAKE ADJUSTMENTS IN IDEOLOGICAL VERBIAGE OR APPEARANCES WHEN THE OCCASION DEMANDS IT, WITHOUT, HOWEVER, SERIOUSLY ALERTING THE UNDERLYING SUBSTANCES. PEDERSEN

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